

## NOTES &amp; NEWS

## New Range Extensions for Chitons

(Amphineura : Polyplacophora)

BY

GEORGE A. HANSELMAN

Museum Associate, San Diego Natural History Museum  
P. O. Box 1390, San Diego, California 92112

THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH developments in marine biology follow extensions of the technological or commercial frontier is often gratifying.

In March 1975 Mr. Roger Dick was serving aboard the Tenneco-owned vessel *Prospector*, which at that time was collecting samples of manganese nodules in the eastern Pacific in an area near 15° N Lat. and 125° W Long. In the course of dredging for nodules at a depth of 4000 m (2167 fathoms) Mr. Dick was able to collect several small marine specimens – a shrimp, some specimens of a brittle star species, several snail species, a species of ubiquitous abyssal bivalve, and a small chiton – all of which he placed in alcohol and eventually delivered to Dr. George E. Radwin, Curator of Marine Invertebrates, San Diego Natural History Museum.

The chiton proved an unusual find as it appears to be a second recorded specimen of *Lepidopleurus (Leptochiton) benthus* (Haddon, 1886). The original specimen was collected by H. M. S. *Challenger* from 2300 fathoms (4246m) at position 35°41'N Lat. and 157°42'E Long. The present specimen is curled; the straight length would measure 7-8mm. The cross-section is well-rounded, as noted by Haddon, and the nose plate presents a rounded

rather than a straight profile. The sculpture consists of fine round pustules which are generally irregularly scattered, but which tend to form rows aligned longitudinally on the pleural areas and somewhat concentrically on the end plates; this linear formation, however, is neither strong nor consistent. Aside from an understandably shrunken and deformed girdle, the specimen is in good condition.

In a similar fashion, the advent of the new paved Baja California highway has proved beneficial. Previously, a land trip to Bahía de Los Angeles (29° N Lat., 133°35' W Long.) on the Gulf of California was an arduous trek of several days which militated against transport of heavy equipment. The trip can now be made in one day in a heavily loaded standard vehicle. In May 1975, shortly after the opening of the new road, Mr. and Mrs. C. Shy and Mr. & Mrs. L. Poorman transported boats and dredging equipment to Bahía de Los Angeles and dredged the Bahía for 10 days. In addition to the usual Gulf chitons, another species, *Lepidopleurus (Xiphiozona) heathi* Berry, 1919, was collected, representing a surprisingly large range extension. This chiton, described from off Monterey, California in 15 fathoms (28 m), has previously been collected only from the type area and south to off Redondo Beach, California, always in approximately 28 m. That geographical range has now been significantly extended to Bahía de Los Angeles, Baja California, Mexico, in the channel between the mainland and Isla Coronado (Isla Smith) at a depth of 28 m on a bottom of dead shells and small stones. All specimens taken are absolutely typical in all aspects, and in several cases bear the same touch of lavender coloration that appears on some specimens from Southern California.

## Literature Cited

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